

THE LANGUAGE OF THE CROSS

ADDRESSES ON THE SEVEN
LAST WORDS HAVING REFERENCE
TO THE WAR



J. H. WILLIAMS, M.A.

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Engene S. Pearce

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ADDRESSES ON THE SEVEN LAST WORDS
HAVING REFERENCE TO THE WAR

BY THE REV.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE other day one of our English illustrated papers had a picture of some British soldiers visiting the scene of a recent battle, in which they themselves had taken part. How full of interest must that spot have been to them! They could go over again the incidents of yesterday's battle. They could observe the effect of their own firing, the damage done, the havoc wrought. In particular instances they could estimate the success or failure of their efforts and determine the reason for the one or the other. The picture would be of interest too to the friends and relatives of the heroes who took part in the battle. "It was here that the German trenches were charged, and my boy was amongst those who charged them," says a father. "It must have been about here that my brother was wounded," remarks a sister, as she gazes at the illustration. "Ah, I wonder," cries a broken-hearted mother, "where my lad met his death." Verily, the picture was full of interest to combatants and non-combatants. That battle is a thing of the past, but interest in it is not dead. It will live in the memory of many and many people for months, yea years.

So, to-day, we visit Calvary, the place around which the most sacred and sublime associations gather. It is a place of all places which we love in memory and imagination to frequent, sanctified as it is for ever by the event which transpired there more than nineteen centuries ago. We visit Calvary to-day not merely

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that we may gaze upon the uplifted Cross and behold the Divine Sufferer, but that we may listen to the Last Words of our dear Lord. The dying utterances of our Divine Redeemer we regard as the most significant words of Him Who spake as never man spake. And surely if the last words which have been whispered into our ears by earthly friends in the moment of death are shrined in our hearts' inmost sanctuary, and held as a possession ever dear, these last words of our Lord will be treasured as inexpressibly and everlastingly precious by us all ! The words were uttered from the Cross in the midst of inexpressible agonies endured on our account. They are words full of tenderness and love. The longer we ponder these final utterances of Christ, the more devoutly we meditate on them, the more does His wonderful character unfold itself to our view ; the more beauty do we discern to admire ; the more majesty to reverence ; and the more of that deep and exhaustless love wherewith our weary souls may refresh themselves.

We have on the pages of this world's history the record of many remarkable deaths. We read of men who were martyrs to some great truth, some high and noble principle. This terrible war has furnished us with numerous instances of heroes who fought like gentlemen and who died like Christians ; but history has never yet recorded for us a death like this. By noble men in their dying moments many memorable words have been uttered, but no words like these last words of Jesus. We need not wonder that from a Roman soldier who witnessed this scene and listened to the words there was extorted the confession : " Certainly this was a righteous Man." Nor need we be surprised that a sceptic should have made the singular acknowledgment, " If Socrates lived and died as a philosopher, Christ lived and died as God."

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What words could more remarkably and beautifully express our Lord's character than these words of merciful and high-priestly intercession which He offered up for His murderers. He has been laid on the Cross. The cruel nails have been mercilessly driven through His sacred hands and feet. The Cross, with its mass of quivering humanity, has been raised and planted firmly into the ground. God's own Son is made a spectacle to men and angels. The Roman soldiers beneath are gambling for His seamless robe. The base rabble throng around. In their depravity they jeer, they crack jokes. The Jewish priests and rabbis are there; deadly hate manifests itself in word and action. He, the Sinless One, is lifted up as a spectacle for men to mock at. He is the subject of extreme bodily torture. He is the object of indignity and reviling. A lull succeeds the brutal jests and sharp applause. No one has anything more to say. The soldiers sit down to watch the dying Saviour. In that silence He opens His blessed mouth and speaks; but His first words are not spoken in defence of Himself, not in accusation of others. They are not words of defiance or imprecation. No! He fulfils the ancient prophecy; He makes intercession for the transgressors. He carries out His own injunction—praying for them who were spitefully using and persecuting Him.

In this Christian land of ours Good Friday is not observed as it should be. By many it is regarded as a mere worldly holiday or a favourite opportunity for attending to the garden. Yet it is the most solemn day in the Christian year. It is of vital importance that we observe it rightly. For in the voluntary sufferings and death of our Lord we see not only the crowning act of the perfection of holiness, but also the true character and just deserts of sin. Come, then, brothers, let us now watch at the foot of the Cross. Let us

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take a long, long look at Jesus dying. We may not live to see another Good Friday. Let us, then, gaze on our Saviour more closely and more intensely than we have ever done before. Let us watch His dying look, His parting words, His expiring breath. Then in the power of that wondrous and awful scene breathe in our inmost hearts the words, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world." He was lifted up that He might draw men after Him and give life to all, but we must come to Him and have life if we would be drawn up after Him. Let us listen, then, to His dying words as we watch during the three hours in which He hung on the Cross.

We live in a world of change. This very season of the year, the lengthening days, the shorter nights, the budding leaves, the altered aspect of our fields and gardens, all admonish us that we are passing through a change. The cold cheerless days of winter are gone, and the bright summer is coming ; and if we turn from looking at the face of nature to view the aspect of the political heavens, what dark clouds do we see over-casting the horizon and spreading themselves over the present scene ! What an eventful time is this ! The little cloud, the size of a man's hand, spreads more and more until, at last, more than three years ago, it burst into a storm which has deluged the continent of Europe and other parts of the habitable globe with pools of blood. Wars and rumours are shaking the nations. A warlike spirit has spread through all countries. A feeling of unrest is everywhere prevalent. Our own country, in the cause of righteousness and in self-defence, has had to enter the desperate conflict, and is fighting for her very existence. In all these events we see the sovereignty of God and the hastening of that blessed period when wars shall cease, and the know-

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ledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Meanwhile, as we sit at the foot of the Cross, may the Lord stay our heart upon Himself and give us grace to feel and believe that though all things change, there is One Who changeth not—Jesus Christ abideth the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. May God grant in and through His crucified Son that by faith in Him, and by the operations of His blessed Spirit upon our hearts, we may receive a kingdom which cannot be moved. May we feel on this Good Friday that, though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, God is still our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Amidst the shocks of armies, amid the clash of arms, His throne stands secure. The very stars may sooner drop from the sky than the saints of God fall out of His heart or hands. It will be well if we can, amidst every changing scene, thus stay our hearts upon the Lord, for God “is faithful.” It will be our mercy if we can hang upon His covenant love and superabounding grace, and act to-day upon His gracious invitation: “Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

Our thoughts dwell on Calvary to-day, and the evil deeds done there. Those were the words of the devil, and the devil and his works still exist. The horrors of this dreadful war are due to Satan. The same evil spirit who induced sinful men to crucify the Lord of Glory has at this time induced the unruly wills and affections of sinful men to rush into the throes of a devastating war. As we see Jesus to-day hanging on the Cross, there is comfort for us in the thought that He, our Elder Brother, vanquished Satan. He has pledged Himself to assist us. Hence we pray in

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our Litany, "That it may please" Him "to strengthen us," so that, "finally, we may beat down Satan under our feet." Yes, it is to-day due to the Evil One that the face of nature is disfigured and distorted by the horrors of war. The flat fields of Flanders, in appearance like to the plains of Bethlehem, have been turned into fields of blood. To-day the order of Bible history has been reversed. It would appear that Calvary is for us the way to Bethlehem. The peace of God would not be ours had not our Blessed Lord fought the good fight of Calvary, and triumphed over the devil. He brought us peace through conflict. So, to-day, whilst our Lord is hanging on the Cross, we, as a nation, are fighting against the modern Huns and their allies. We are, I trust and believe, also fighting the powers of evil, against Satan and his hosts. As we gaze at the dying Jesus what encouragement have we to fight when we remember that we are fighting a *beaten* foe; for He was, as on this day, beaten by our Lord on Calvary. We well know, to-day, that our material foes are already beaten, but a beaten foe may have a great deal of fighting left in him. We had an instance of this in the Boer War. In the same manner the devil is still full of fight, malice, and fury. May He, Whose crucifixion took place as on this day, assist us by His Holy Spirit to vanquish Satan, for we can never do so in our own strength.

It is the law of our nature both as respects our bodies and our souls, that unless we look closely and for a good while at any object we do not get a correct and abiding impression of it. If an individual, who knows something of art, is taken to see a picture in order that he may give an opinion on its merit, he sits down before it and looks at it long and carefully before he makes up his mind respecting it. And how true is this of our moral nature! How certainly by constantly seeing

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and associating with people do we become so impressed with their manners and actions that insensibly we are moulded into the same likeness. And so it is with religion. We are saved by looking at Christ and using the means of grace which He provided for us. The eternal happiness for which we ought to be constantly longing and labouring is absolutely associated with holiness, and the pattern of holiness for us to gaze at and to copy is Jesus Christ. Who shall rightly speak of the effects that follow a long, close looking at our dying Lord, if only he who looks has his eyes opened by the Spirit of God? If that man has been living in sin and hurting by his bad example those around him, ah! how does the spectacle on Golgotha meet his eyes and break his heart, leading him to cry out, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." Or, if the man gazing at the Cross has already learnt the truth, then must the Cross of Jesus be ever before him in order that he may learn to crucify the old man, and, in the power of his Lord, overcome the world, and fit himself for the presence of the all-holy God in the world to come.

Let us now turn to the consideration of our Lord's dying words, and the lessons which they teach us.

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THE FIRST WORD.

THE WORD OF INTERCESSION.

S. LUKE XXIII. 34.

“ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.”

WHO were the objects of this prayer ? Who were interested in it ? They were men who were engaged in the commission of a crime of unparalleled atrocity. They were people who were crucifying the Son of God, the Lord of Glory, and putting Him to an open shame. It was for these that

I. *The petition was presented* when our Lord's sense of the indignity offered to Him must have been most keen and His physical agony most intense. He prayed the words, “ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.” A remarkable, indeed, a quite unexampled, prayer this, in whatever light it is regarded. The victim who suffers from all the rancour, malignity, pitiless persecution of His murderers is One of unblemished reputation, of pure, spotless life, of boundless benevolence. He is One Who has come forth upon an errand of love and mercy. Yes, the one instance of moral perfection ever presented to the world is the One around Whom on Calvary, there surged and roared that terrible sea of passion and sin ; and it was the very moral superiority of our Lord, the very purity of

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His principles, which awakened the animosity which there so fatally expressed itself. Had He been of the world, of kindred spirit and aim, the world would have recognized and loved its own; but because He was not of the world, but altogether nobler, truer, purer, and as such was a standing rebuke of the world's sin, therefore the world hated Him. The murderers of our Lord—those for whom this prayer was offered—put no limit upon the expression of their hatred. There was no mercy mingling with their malignity. They exhausted their ingenuity in devising means of increasing suffering and deepening degradation. And yet for these men does Christ pray. He prays not that swift and fiery vengeance might visit and consume them; not that the earth might yawn and swallow them; not that they might bear upon their brow the brand of eternal infamy, or carry about in their souls the abiding remembrance of this deed. No! But wonder, O heavens, and be ye astonished, O earth! His prayer is, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

As we listen to this prayer we should try and realize what is involved in this one word *Forgiveness*. The prayer is not merely that these men, so depraved, so prejudiced, so cruel, so resolutely set in imbruing their hands in innocent blood, should not be visited with the punishment which by their sins they were invoking. That alone would have been a great boon. Oh, no! Our Lord's prayer means more than this. He prays that they may be restored to a state of purity and blessedness. He asks that they who were engaged in putting Him to death might enjoy that pardon which could only reach them through the Cross. He seeks that they might be justified by His blood, sanctified by His Spirit, and that they might sit down with Him in that Kingdom, the way to which He Himself was. How can we measure the love which thus leads our

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Lord to pray that the very men who were putting Him to a cruel and ignominious death may share all the privileges of an endless life.

What light does this prayer shed upon our Lord's invariable character and purpose as the Redeemer of men? It is a character and purpose of love, the expressions of which cannot be hindered by any stress of outward circumstances. Hostile rejection of offered service and malignant aspersion of character have turned many patriots and philanthropists from the path of benevolence and led them to retire in cynical seclusion from the world. When we read of or witness the diabolical cruelty of our enemies in the present war, in their submarine and aerial warfare, we cast aside all thought of prayer on their behalf, unless it be a prayer for vengeance. But nothing of this kind have we in Jesus Christ, as these words of merciful intercession uttered in most trying circumstances attest. Our Lord's character, our Lord's purposes cannot alter; and it is a blessed thing for us that it is so. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

This prayer must not be viewed as a special or isolated expression of our Lord's love. It is in perfect harmony with His whole life. For it was in order that men might be forgiven that Christ came into the world. This was the master-passion of His soul. Therefore, by no misrepresentation, by no persecution could He be turned aside from His work. He can hear unmoved, save by pity, that shout drowning every other shout: "Crucify, crucify Him." Extended there upon the Cross in agony which may not be described, He can answer that shout with the intercession "Father, forgive them."

In offering this prayer we see our Lord teaching us the practical lesson of Christian forgiveness. Our Lord ever taught by example. He lived the religion

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which He preached. He goes before us in all things, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps. The duty of forgiving our enemies, of doing good and praying for those who spitefully use us and persecute us, is one of the distinguishing duties of Christianity. It is a duty of which men never dreamt before the Advent of Christ. It is one of the triumphs of the Cross that mercy, however slowly, is really supplanting vindictive revenge. You may search through the entire treasury of Pagan literature to find any such teaching. Possibly one reason for the brutality and cruelty of our foes to-day is due to their having imbibed the cruel teaching of a Pagan philosopher. But turning to our own literature we find the words of one whose lamp was lighted at the sacred fire of love :

“ The quality of mercy is not strain’d ;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath ; it is twice bless’d—
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”

This is just one of the many passages in our literature which could not have been written or conceived had Christ not lived and died. Let it ever be remembered by us that it is at the Cross of our Lord we are afforded the surest hope of forgiveness. It is there, too, that we have urged upon us in the most impressive and emphatic way the duty of forgiveness.

II. But we must consider not only the petition which was presented, but also *The Prayer by which it was Sustained*. “ Father, forgive them ; *for they know not what they do.*” It is as though our Lord said, ‘ Father, forgive them, for whom I die. Lay not even this sin to their charge. I die that they may be saved—that Thou mightest be just and yet the justifier of all that believe in Me.’ But this appeal was associated

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with a plea of extenuation urged on behalf of those for whom the prayer was offered: "They know not what they do."

It is not easy to determine how far those who were associated in securing our Lord's death could plead ignorance. The Roman soldiers probably were the most ignorant and therefore, save for their unnecessary cruelty, most innocent. But all classes of the Jews were occupying an essentially different and worse position. Their presence at the Cross was voluntary. They themselves had brought about the consummation which they were there to witness. Though they may have been and actually were not satisfied that Jesus was the Messiah, otherwise we are told they would not have sought His crucifixion. Yet they must have known and felt that He was unjustly condemned. Knowing, then, that the charge against Him was false and malicious, it is impossible to reprobate too strongly the conduct of those who were present at the Cross, and by their presence assisted at the crucifixion.

"They know not what they do." These words seem to shadow forth a dark possibility. Though it is not affirmed, yet the idea cannot but occur to us that had they known all that was involved in the crime which they were perpetrating, forgiveness might have been an impossible thing. As it was they failed to read aright the character of Him against whom their malignity was directed. Their prejudice blinded them. Consequently, as their evil work was wrought in ignorance and unbelief, the Intercessor feels that theirs is a sin which may be prayed for. His word is, "Father, forgive them. However guilty they may be, at least they know not this that they are crucifying Thy Son. They know not what they do."

These words have a permanent significance. They are not to be ranked with the utterances of the religious

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dead, but regarded as the abiding words of the ever-living Saviour. Still, if we will but listen for His voice we may hear the great Intercessor pleading not only for His friends, but also for His enemies. He, when His bodily presence was withdrawn from this world, did not intermit His mediatorial work ; He merely passed from the outer court where the sacrifice was wont to be offered and where He Himself offered sacrifice once and for all to the temple's shrine, the holiest of holies. There on the ground of that once-offered sacrifice, and arrayed in the robes of a once humiliated but now glorified human nature, He ever liveth to make intercession both for saints and sinners.

Yes, from that glorious place, as once from Calvary's Cross, does the Divine Saviour look down with sad and pitiful eyes and with yearning heart upon those who in innumerable ways are still sinning against Him. These are crucifying Him afresh and putting Him to an open shame. On their behalf does He pour forth the words of merciful intercession: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

We must never forget in our judgment of others that many an evil act may be done by a misguided mind. Possibly much wrong done in the world or in the Church will not meet with the condemnation which we are ready to accord to it. For the motive was not always evil. When our merciful Lord attributed the wrong-doing of His murderers to ignorance, He gave to us an eternal lesson and a luminous example of forgiveness.

We may well pray on this holy day, "O Lord, deliver me from the deadly sin of anger, and make me meek and forgiving." Anger causes a vast amount of unhappiness. It generally has its root in the sin of pride. It was pride which, more or less, caused this present disastrous war. Certain events afforded Germany, who ruled Austria, the pretext for forcing her will

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upon other nations, and appealing to the force of arms. How true it is of Germany, her people, and her dupes—"They know not what they do." Influenced by the passion of anger, she and hers forget that God has never yet upheld devilry, cruelty, and lust of power. Whilst we, as a people, cannot help despising our cruel foes; whilst our natural ties of affection for the dead and suffering cause us to be incensed against these unscrupulous enemies, yet we have reason to pity them. Retribution must await them, for as a man soweth so shall he reap. May God grant us, in the midst of our sufferings, grace to pray for our foes in His own dying words, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It is, it will be, very difficult to do so, for we are human. Yet we should ever remember how His enemies treated the gentle Jesus, and how He prayed for them.

A lady lost a little daughter. Her sorrow was very great. In order to keep her hands busy about something connected with the child, she painted a photograph of the dead little one, until the sweet face seemed to live before her eyes. When the work was completed she laid the picture in a drawer. In a few days she looked at it again and it was covered with ugly blotches. Some chemical ingredient in the printing paper mingling with the paint produced blemishes. So it is with human lives. While the heart is wrong it is no use to try and make the character right. Evermore, up out of the evil heart comes the pollution of sin which spots and blotches everything. The only way to have a pure and noble life is by having a clean good heart—a heart like that of our great Exemplar, Who was able to pray, as He died, for His murderers.

THE SECOND WORD.

THE WORD OF KINGLY MAJESTY.

S. LUKE XXIII. 42, 43.

“ And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

WE come now to our Lord's second utterance from the Cross, which we have characterized as the word of kingly majesty. The promise given to the dying outlaw of immediate entrance into the joys of Paradise was evidently the second of our Lord's dying words. The first was the word of intercession, the second the word of promise. We hear our Lord first praying for the forgiveness of His murderers, and we then see Him throwing open the door of grace to one of the greatest sinners. We first see our Lord's high-priestly character shining forth in an intercession founded in His sacrificial death. We then see Him declaring His kingly majesty at the very moment when His kingly office was subjected to the most supreme contempt.

But to understand this second utterance of Christ we must consider the petition which called it forth. What immediate effect was wrought in the minds of those who listened to the remarkable prayer of our Lord for His murderers it is hard to determine. But we may gather from the narrative that the result in the majority

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of cases was excitement to a more desperate and determined energy in word and deed. While we cannot read the secrets of their hearts, we are presented with a most impressive picture of the outward conduct of those who were congregated around the Cross. There is Jesus lifted up on the accursed tree, crucified between two robbers. How are men regarding Him? Had we mingled with that throng we should have found men and women regarding the same event with widely different feelings. There are the Scribes and Pharisees who have come to the scene of the crucifixion that they might enjoy the cruel satisfaction of witnessing the issue of their malignant conspiracy. The common people regarded with stupid astonishment the scene before them. On the outskirts of the crowd were some of the crucified One's acquaintances and friends, possessed of a love that would not allow them to go away. And there is that poor crucified felon, upon whom the shadow of death was falling, who was able to look in faith upon the crucified Saviour and was able to forget the agony of the crucifixion in the joy of knowing that he was to be that day with Christ in Paradise. Here are two things to be considered by us, viz., the prayer of the crucified thief and the reply of the crucified Saviour.

I. *The prayer presented by this poor crucified thief.* "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." In order to estimate the significance of this prayer, we must take into account the circumstances under which it was uttered. There were many things calculated to discourage this man from offering such a petition. There was the position of Him to whom it was presented. It needed very strong faith to believe in Christ at such a time. Christ on the Cross, forsaken by friends, reviled by enemies, addressed constantly in the seemingly conclusive words: "He saved others,

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Himself He cannot save." Does it seem to us even now an easy thing for one to have appealed to our Lord under such circumstances? Yet it was at such a moment, when exposed to influences so disheartening that this poor man cried, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The faith so suddenly expressed by this man is found associated with all the marks of genuine faith that are conceivable in his case. There is the expression of deepest penitence on account of past sins. There is no attempt at self-justification. He says to his associate in crime, "We indeed suffer justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." There is appreciation of Christ's character and the fullest recognition of His innocence. "This man," he says, "has done nothing amiss." There is sympathy with Jesus in His sufferings. He, who but a short time before had been uttering blasphemy himself, now attempts to shield our Lord from the blasphemous revilings of his companion. And with all this there is the recognition of Christ as his Sovereign and Saviour. His prayer is: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Yes, even then he was able to recognize the kingship of Christ and to commit unto Him the keeping of his soul. Touchingly beautiful is this short and simple prayer, expressive of the deepest humility and the most implicit faith. He asks for nothing but *remembrance*. He does not ask for some chief place in the kingdom, or even a place therein at all, but only to be remembered. He feels that to be borne upon Christ's heart in remembrance is enough.

In considering this prayer we have to think not only of Him *to* Whom it was offered, but of him also *by* whom it was offered. How unlikely a man he was to have offered prayer at all! He was a condemned malefactor—a man whom we might have reasonably concluded to have been hardened against every good

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and gracious influence. Yet this man apparently so abandoned was, and quite at the close of his misspent life, saved by an exercise of faith in Jesus Christ.

II. But now we have to consider the *answer returned by the crucified Saviour*. It is prompt and gracious. It is a word of majesty and honour. "Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Very impressive is the interval of silence between our Lord's first word of intercession and His second word of promise. We are awed by the majestic tranquillity He maintains in these moments of suffering. But we are glad that the silence is broken. When the cry of penitence and prayer fell upon the ear of the dying Saviour, it elicited an immediate response. He Who disregarded the revilings of the multitude, turned upon the dying malefactor a look of love and uttered the ever memorable words, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." And notice the assurance given is not only that the dying criminal shall be admitted to Paradise, but that he shall be there with his dying Lord. To-day—there is to be no waiting. Our Lord assures the thief that He will pass him at once, as soon as body and soul part, into the garden of the just, where he shall rest until the final day of Judgment. Our Lord's first word on the Cross prays that repentance and grace may be given to sinners; the second opens the door to a chief among sinners. The first has to do with the kingdom of grace, the second with the kingdom of glory. In the answer which our Lord gave to the penitent malefactor we have an example of the assurance that grace is richer than prayer, for God gives us more than we desire or deserve. The chief butler, who promised on his liberation from prison to keep Joseph in remembrance, forgot him and left him to languish unremembered in prison. But Jesus does

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not forget—the answer comes at once: “This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

From these words we may well lay to heart two great lessons:

First, we may well learn our Lord's great readiness to receive and pardon all who turn to Him in penitence and faith. We see His great love for the sinful and erring. He willeth not the death of a sinner, for He came to seek those who were lost. He came to call sinners to repentance. “In that day”—the day of our Lord's sojourn on earth—“there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness.” That prophecy is fulfilled. The sacred blood of Jesus flows, and in this fountain the thief is purified. Wondrous to think of! The first to approach that fountain and wash and be cleansed is a criminal dying on the Cross! To every dying believer our Lord says what He said to the crucified robber, “To-day shalt thou dwell with Me in Paradise.” Whenever and wherever we may be called to die, may it be our joy to see our divine Saviour bending over us and hear Him whisper into our ear those words of gracious assurance, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

But, secondly, it must not be overlooked that something must precede pardon and acceptance, and that is penitence. The thief was promised Paradise not because he was a thief but because he was a penitent. He manifested the fruits of true repentance. He confessed his unworthiness; he expiated his guilt by resignation and patient endurance. He pleaded for mercy from the Lord of Mercy. He gave every proof that his conversion was real, that his heart was contrite. Therefore it was that the Lord promised him Paradise.

The pardon of this dying criminal, we must not forget, may be an exceptional case, connected with

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the peculiar events which occurred at the time of our Lord's crucifixion. Yet, who can tell what the wonder-working grace of Him Who was born at Bethlehem and died on Calvary can accomplish during the last moments of man's conscious responsibility. The Holy Spirit of God yet works in the minds of men, bringing many long forgotten and despised truths to their remembrance and applying them with power to their hearts. The home-scenes, the prayers and aspirations of childhood are brought back to the mind in the hour of death ; and thus, doubtless, it has been with our brave warriors who have perished in the present war. However thoughtless they may have been, who, for one moment, can doubt their seriousness when face to face with death. Shall we exaggerate when we maintain that many of them have gone forth to battle with the prayer on their lips and in their hearts, " Lord, remember me." Who can doubt that these brave men who have sacrificed their lives on behalf of their country have received the promise from the great Captain of their salvation—" This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," and so shall they be ever with the Lord.

By way of recapitulation let us dwell on the lesson of penitence as taught in this second word of our dying Lord. The dying thief gives proof of his faith, love, and humility. He did not say, " Forget me and my sins," but rather, like St. Peter, " Lord, Thou knowest all things, all my sins, Thou knowest that I love Thee." How anxious we are through pride that our sins should be hidden and forgotten. Humility is the first essential to penitence. It will lead us to confess our sins. In answer to his prayer the thief was rewarded with the promise of Paradise. This was the word of absolution. He was forgiven, but he had to suffer just the same. He was crucified. So we must often bear the cross of the results of our sins as our

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penance. His absolution showed no fruits in this life. Then what an immense trial of his faith it was to see his Saviour die, for our Lord died first? Nevertheless, our Lord shared with him His spiritual kingdom, which he had won at such a cost. Do we ever think others unworthy to share with us the blessings of the Gospel? Do we ever despise others?

The valley of Chambrá in India is rich in its fertility and beauty. The cause is a wonderful spring of water which irrigates the whole valley. Once, says the legend, it was without water and there was desolation everywhere. The princess of the place took the sorrows of her subjects much to heart. She consulted an oracle to learn how the curse of drought might be removed. She was told that if the princess of the land would die for the people abundant water would be given. She hastened to give her life. Her grave was made and she was buried alive. Then forth from the tomb came a river restoring all languishing life in field and garden. This old heathen legend beautifully illustrates what our Lord did. The world was perishing for the want of the water of life. Jesus died and was buried, and from His Cross and broken grave poured out the water of life for the quenching of the world's thirst. Its streams run everywhere. Wherever they flow the wilderness has been made to blossom like a garden of roses. All the world's joy comes from the death of our Blessed Lord.

THE THIRD WORD.

THE WORD OF FILIAL AFFECTION.

S. JOHN XIX. 26, 27.

“When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy Son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour he took her unto his own home.”

THE three Marys—the three Marys of the Cross—is the picture with which we are here presented. It is a picture which has been preserved for us only in the Gospel of St. John.

Seven times does our suffering Lord break silence while hanging upon the Cross. The dying Saviour speaks in tones so thrilling, in language so significant, that we feel it is for us to treasure up every word He uttered on this memorable occasion. These seven final words of the Lord Jesus are evidently divisible into two classes. The first three of which appear to have been spoken before the darkness had reference to others. The last four had reference to Himself alone. The first word is spoken with a sublime forgetfulness of self. The second word of grace actually effects the forgiveness of sins in one who is the first fruits of sinners. And now, reminded by the word Paradise of the state into which He is about to enter, and of those whom He shall leave behind, He utters His third word of filial affection, which so distinctly reveals the deep,

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true human sympathy of our Saviour. As High Priest He supplicates even for the transgressors ; as King He dispenses grace and salvation to the suppliant. In this third word we see Him display that tender, sympathetic care which forgets not, even in the moment of greatest distraction and suffering, the interests and need of those who are dependent upon it. In the two first words our Lord speaks as the Divine Saviour. In the third utterance we hear Him speaking as the Son of Man. Let us then be careful to apprehend distinctly both sides of our Saviour's character, and rejoice to know that He Whom angels worship is not far removed from any one of us. He is One Who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, being our Brother and our Friend as well as our God and Saviour.

But we must look a little more intently at the picture with which we are here presented. It is a little group standing now very near the Cross, hoping, perchance, that some dying look, expressive of recognition, may even yet be directed to them. Who are they ? There is St. John, the youngest of the twelve Apostles, whom we picture as a mild gentleman. He alone of the Apostles and disciples ventures there accompanied by some women—and this is not so strange as it seems. He who has the gentlest spirit in time of security will often be found to display the truest courage in seasons of real danger. And so of the women. We see here only what has been often seen elsewhere. At times when the hearts of strong men have failed and have been dismayed, weak women with resolute hearts have stepped forth to do and to dare in such a way as to shame the shrinking cowardice of men. The one of all that little group of women who most claims our attention is not Mary Magdalene, nor that other Mary, but Blessed Mary the mother of Jesus. What her feelings were, as she stood beholding the dying agony of her Son, no

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tongue can tell. Her heart was being riven and pierced by that sword of which the aged Simeon thirty-three years ago had forewarned her in the temple. All the keenness of that sword-thrust is she now feeling as she stands near the Cross.

“ See her standing by the Cross,
In her untold grief so lone;
Ah! she mourns the double loss
Of a Saviour and a Son!
Who her weary woe can see
And not weep in sympathy? ”

In order to understand her woe we must look back for a little. If we would understand the sorrow of any parting, we must remember the nature of the tie which is being severed.

The first years of our Lord's life were spent almost entirely in Nazareth with His mother. As soon as He began His public ministry, the relationship began to alter, and the sword began to pierce. He must seem to slight His earthly mother's love in doing His heavenly Father's business. And now, on the Cross, will He Who seems so lifted above humanity, forget His earthly relationship? No. In this third utterance Jesus declares His filial love. He shows that He Who can forgive and save as God can feel as a Son. Henceforth she is to know Him no more as a Son in the flesh in order that she may know Him more fully in the Spirit. But He will not leave her without an earthly son, There will be one to comfort and support her in her declining years of earthly life. He looks down from the Cross and says, “ Woman, behold thy Son ” ; and then glancing from her to the disciple who was standing by, He said, “ Behold thy mother.” And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home. The sword of which Simeon spake has pierced her indeed.

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Having thus glanced at the scene let us more particularly consider the words uttered by our Lord on this occasion, for they are words so distinctly expressive of His filial affection.

I. *The Words which our Lord addressed to His mother.* "Woman, behold thy Son!" "Woman," He says in parting with her on the Cross, as He said at the beginning of His ministry at Cana. But there is nothing of coldness or reproach in the term. According to the original Greek the word should be rendered "Lady." Before leaving this earth our Lord made His will. He bequeathed His mother to the care of the beloved disciple, He gave His body to the grave, His blood to His Church, and His soul to His Father. There are some who maintain that when our Lord placed His blessed mother in the care of S. John, He entrusted her to S. John as representing the rest of the Apostolic band and so to the Church on earth. Be this as it may, it is clear that in our fear lest we should say too much respecting the blessed mother, we pass into the opposite extreme and say too little. Holy Mary was the mother of our Lord, and we are one with Him. So to some extent His mother becomes ours. It is as much as to say, "Let her memory be ever held in honour; let her be regarded as the pattern of Virgin purity and of maternal love. All generations shall call her blessed, who truly recognize Me as God Incarnate, born of the substance of my mother, very God, yet also very man," Surely we have in this word from the Cross an exhortation to family love, and to consideration for those who are bound by ties of blood. Those ties are sacred and are not to be broken, not to be shaken off. Children should ever remember that, do what they will, they can never repay their parents for what they have done for them. They cannot be too thankful for a father's considerate care and wise control; but how much more do they

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owe to a mother's love. If there be one prodigal in the family, no matter where he is, the mother's heart goes forth to him. Not only should children honour and obey their parents while the state of childhood lasts, but in after life, when they are no longer dependent on them, or have passed beyond their immediate control. When parents have become old and decrepit, it should be accounted not a duty grudgingly discharged, but an honour and a privilege, to minister to their comfort or their need.

II. This thought brings us to the consideration of the *Words which our Lord addressed* to the beloved *disciple*. He said to the disciple, "Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." S. John was selected by Christ, we may be sure, as the one who was in every way best fitted to make up to blessed Mary the loss which would at first appear to her so sad and irreparable. All that could be done to secure for her a peaceful end and a happy old age we may be certain S. John did. We know not how long these two lived together, but we are sure that their communion was sweet. We can surely believe that this close and intimate intercourse with the mother of Jesus was the means of enabling S. John to bring the living, loving, personal Christ nearer to us than any other New Testament writer. The other Evangelists tell us what Jesus did. S. John treasures up the most precious words of His Lord. These he presents to our wondering and admiring eyes in His divine and human personality, the very Christ of God.

"Behold thy mother." We may well take these words in a symbolical sense. We are all by our baptism sons of the Church. The Church is our spiritual mother. She instructs us by the teaching of her ministry and nourishes us with sacramental graces. Ah, yes, this exhortation should ring in our ears to-day. There is

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much coldness and indifference in men's hearts towards the Church—the mother of us all. There is, there can be no relationship so close, so dear as between a mother and child. And so a close relationship ought to exist between our spiritual mother, the Church, and her children born at Holy Baptism, in the faith of Christ's crucified.

On one occasion some one came to our Lord and said, "Thy mother and Thy brethren are without desiring to speak with Thee." He replied, "He who doeth the will of My Father, the same is My mother, and sister and brother." All who belong to this great spiritual family Christ loves with an unchanging love, and provides for with a tender and untiring carefulness.

We should be thankful that the precept of Sinai, "Honour thy father and mother," is sustained by the sanction of Calvary, and that, whilst dying for our sins, Christ left us an example of filial affection that we in this, as in all other respects, might follow in His steps.

But we must further note that this third word affords us warning against envy, and forthwith we should pray "from envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness, good Lord deliver us." Envy or jealousy is essentially selfishness. It clings exclusively to the possession of things and will not share them with others. It is one great element of disunion. This hateful spirit of envy has caused one great continental power to embroil the world in a mighty conflict. This envy which seeks only to use men and nations as pieces in the game of war is, to-day, compelling many a mother, like holy Mary of old, to stand by her cross and to witness the separation from her of son or husband. She is compelled to hear of the sufferings of her loved ones and possibly of their death.

Our Lord, too, in giving up His mother—the mother He loved—bears witness against that spirit of jealousy

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in family life which makes home miserable. Similarly, in giving up His friend He witnesses against jealousy in friendship. There is only one real bond of friendship which will always last, namely, the common bond of the love of Jesus. There can be no envy there. Envy led to the first crime of murder, and that in a family, too. Cain's jealousy led him to kill his brother Abel. Let us pray to-day for a spirit of charity. Let us ever resolve to give up to others anyone of whom we are jealous.

That was a touching story which the late Mr. Gladstone gave in Parliament when announcing the death of Princess Alice. Her little boy was ill with diphtheria and the mother had been cautioned against inhaling the poisoned breath. The child was tossing in the delirium of fever. The Princess laid her hand on his brow. The touch cooled the fevered brain and brought back the wandering soul from its delirium. He whispered, "Mother, kiss me." The instinct of a mother's love was stronger than all the injunctions of physicians. She pressed her lips to the child's. The result was death to herself.

There was peril in our Lord's own mission to this world. In His marvellous love for us, He put His lips to the poison of our sin and died.

THE FOURTH WORD.

THE WORD OF DESERTION.

S. MATT. XXVII. 46.

“ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? ”

WE come to the period of darkness—a darkness which preternaturally descended about midday, and at the time of full moon. This circumstance is to be noted because it is preclusive of the supposition that the darkness is to be accounted for as that consequent upon an eclipse of the sun. This darkness, which was of three hours' duration—lasting from the sixth to the ninth hour, that is from midday to about three o'clock in the afternoon—was a physical circumstance, which we must regard as intimately associated with the remarkable utterance of Christ which we have now to consider. This fourth word, the word of desertion, shows plainly that the waves and billows were indeed rolling over our Lord. It is a cry which must have fallen upon the astonished if not terrified ear of the universe—issuing as it did from the profoundest depths of a voluntarily endured humiliation.

Up to midday the sun shone upon the scene of horror with which we are presented at Calvary. All things pursued their usual course. There was no supernatural portent to indicate that the critical hour

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of the world's history had arrived. But about the sixth hour—at noon, when the sun was shining in all its meridian splendour—a preternatural darkness descended upon the earth, wherewith all found themselves at once enshrouded. It was a warning sign that they were committing a sin of such unparalleled enormity that the sun could no longer shine upon it. It was a manifestation that they were perpetrating a deed of horror which needed to be so veiled. This darkness must have powerfully affected the minds of all capable of thought, awakening a feeling which could naturally enough express itself in the traditional words of Dionysius uttered on beholding the darkness in Egypt: "Either the Divinity Himself is suffering or sympathizes with one who suffers."

In this cry of desertion we have the opening words of Psalm xxii. As we read the Psalm we see the sorrowful form of the Divine sufferer rise up before us. In the Psalm we seem to have the programme of the crucifixion. Our Lord from the first had suffered, but we now come to the very climax of His sufferings. The sufferings now become visible which had long burdened Him invisibly. The sinfulness, the unbelief, the ignorance, the perversity of men everywhere, and always so obtrusive from the very first, must have been occasions of continual suffering to the Redeemer. But towards the close of His life they were concentrated into greater intensity and became the occasions of mere extreme bitterness. That suffering without measure should have burst as a desolating tempest upon the head of the Holy One is less surprising than that the Divine Saviour instead of remaining, as hitherto, unmoved should have been so visibly and so sensibly affected. Does not this reveal to us the fact that our Lord's sufferings consisted chiefly in the travail of His soul? His most extreme physical sufferings were

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those which He endured at an earlier period of His trial. But this exceeding bitter cry which smote against the black unanswering heavens tells us of the *agony of His soul*, which He endured from a strange and terrible consciousness of desertion. No one can understand this cry and what it expressed who refuses to admit that our Lord suffered and endured as our representative. He suffered for us. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. The Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all. Hence His sufferings had a special character and may not be compared with any other sufferings, however extreme. Christ was then vicariously offering a sacrifice for us and vicariously bearing the burden.

Need we wonder, can we wonder, that so situated He should have so suffered, or have thus exclaimed? However regarded, this appeal must be taken as expressive of quite an unexampled state of mind. We may search through the successive pages of the world's history and we shall find no parallel to this. For here we have the strange spectacle of one clinging to God in the exercise of faith, yet at the same time overwhelmed with a terrible sense of being deserted by God. Our Lord is now performing the very work which He came into the world to accomplish. Instead of seeing from the opening heavens a manifestation of glory, or hearing the audible voice proclaiming, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased," there is the agony and chill horror of death. From the Cross shrouded in preternatural darkness there is heard ascending to an apparently inattentive heaven the cry of the God-deserted soul, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." This cry, uttered at this time of sore extremity, has a significance clinging to every word. Upon the force of every word we should thoughtfully dwell.

"*Why* hast Thou forsaken Me?" What is the meaning of this darkening of My Father's face? Are not

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the sufferings of the Cross enough? Will it not suffice that I yield to death and endure its agony? Must I even in the very death-struggle have My Father's face hidden? My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"Why hast *Thou* forsaken Me? That the world should treat Me thus I do not wonder, for I am not of the world. That even My friends should have forsaken Me, I can understand, for I know their weakness. But why hast Thou, the changeless One, Whose name is love?"

"Why hast Thou *forsaken* Me? I might have endured all else—the pain, anguish, and cruelty of friends, the cruelty and weakness of friends—cheered by Thy smile, and conscious of Thy favour; I might endure all this without complaint, but not this greatest woe of all—the hiding of Thy countenance."

"My God, why hast Thou forsaken *Me*?—Me, the Son of Thy love, in Whom was all delight, Who has come to do Thy will."

We see, then, that this fourth word of Christ expresses an extreme sense of solitude, surprise, suffering, combined with a continued trust in God.

I. This cry is expressive of an extreme sense of *solitude*—utter solitude and desolation. It is the cry of the soul that feels itself forsaken. To a very large extent, and from the very first, our Lord's earthly life had been a lonely one. He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him. His character was misunderstood. His words, work, His entire mission were misunderstood, not only by His enemies, but even by His friends and followers. Living no recluse life, having daily intercourse with men, He was yet to a large extent alone. Whatever measure of human sympathy He did enjoy was now removed from Him. Take the innermost circle of His friends and followers. Where are they who with S. Peter said

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that they would rather die than forsake Him? By one He has been betrayed. By another He has been blasphemously and repeatedly denied. Only one of all the twelve ventures near enough to the Cross to catch word or look of the dying Lord. Can we wonder that, hung up between earth and heaven, isolated from both, there should issue from the depths of that awful solitude and silence the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

II. This utterance seems also expressive of surprise. "Why, oh, why, hast Thou forsaken Me?" The consciousness of the favour, the approval of His Father had never been interrupted before. But now in this time of darkness and agony He seems unable to realize the absence of that which had always hitherto been a stay and support to Him. This strange sense of desertion, desolation, abandonment is what He cannot understand. It fills Him with perplexity and astonishment. He wonders not at the faithlessness of His friends or at the rancour of His enemies. His wonder is that at such a time the face of His Father should be hidden.

III. This cry is to be regarded not merely as an expression of the most severe suffering, but reveals to us the fact that the main element in our Saviour's sufferings was *spiritual*. It was an agony of soul—the travail of the Redeemer's soul—of which the old prophet spoke. Here, then, we see our Lord suffering as none but He could suffer. He suffered from a mysterious sense of desertion. Yet all the while He claimed special relationship to God. As the Son of Man he seems amazed, bewildered, terrified, but He feels that God is His God still.

Has not this, the very extremity of our Saviour's woe, a suggestion of comfort for us in the dark and trying hours of life? No such darkness can settle

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on us as settled on Him. No, not even in this dark and trying time of war, when we have in our midst so many Rachels weeping for their children. Our Lord descended to the lowest depths of woe in order that we might not, and that we in the lower deeps might be able to feel that in Jesus Christ we have One Who is able to sympathize as well as to save. We learn from this fourth word how terrible is alienation from God, and see how we should shrink from sin because that separates us from God, and arrests the flow of grace.

And is not this word a word of encouragement to those who believe not—those who are enquiring whether they can be saved? Christ thus suffered, and from this lowest depth of suffering thus exclaimed that He might be able to save to the uttermost all who approach God through Him. Yes, as sinners we shall ever have reason to praise God that for us our dear Lord endured this extremest woe, and in the great travail of His soul cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The cry of dereliction is a cry which drives God away. We should strip ourselves of all that may tempt us to forsake God. Yes, even of things expedient as well as things unlawful. We had better be forsaken by all else than be forsaken by God. We must never go to the edge of the precipice of unlawful desire. We must not place ourselves in the way of temptation. We must give up pleasant society, anything that may prove a temptation. We must ever hear this word of Jesus on the Cross ringing in our ears. On the Cross our Lord spoke as the representative of mankind. He says, "My God," not "My Father." It was the agony of being separated even for a moment from the light of the consciousness of His Father's presence in which He had lived as man. It was our Lord's witness of

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the horror of that which sits so lightly on us, namely, the hiding of God's face from us by clouds of sin. Think of Jesus forsaken. There are times when on our Cross we must feel forsaken and cry these words. To unite ourselves then with the dereliction of Jesus on the Cross must be our comfort—Jesus forsaken, desolate, deserted for us! And what will we do? Will we ever desert Him?

A touching story was told after the American Civil War of a man who travelled a very long distance to stand beside the grave of a soldier who had fallen on the battle-field. He was seen kneeling at the grave with tears streaming down his face. The stone he had just erected told the story; on it was the name of the dead man, and underneath was the inscription, "He died for me." The man who knelt there had been drafted. He had a sick wife and helpless little children, and a neighbour came and said, "You stay at home; I will go to the war for you."

That visitor at the grave lived because the soldier had died for him. We live and have hope, and are heirs of heaven and glory, because Jesus died for us. There is a wondrous motive for consecrated life in the realizing of the truth that we are Christ's, redeemed by the giving of His life for us.

THE FIFTH WORD.

THE WORD OF AGONIZED HUMANITY.

S. JOHN XIX. 28.

“ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.”

WE come now to the fifth word spoken by our Lord from the Cross, which we have designated “ The Word of Agonized Humanity.” “ After this ” generally indicates an immediate consequence, but must not be so understood here. The three hours of darkness and the cry of desertion have intervened. It is not unreasonable to suppose that S. John, having received the commission from our Lord, forthwith conducted blessed Mary to His own house in Jerusalem, so that she might be spared the sorrow of seeing her Son in the time of His extremest agony. The Apostle having thus provided for his charge, returned to the Cross in time to listen to the last words of Christ. That he was present at the very last is placed beyond dispute by verse 35.

We have listened to Jesus as He cried, “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” This cry appears only to have awakened to fresh activity the spirit of mockery and derision which had been in some measure quelled by the supernatural darkness. It was on hearing that cry of desertion that some said, “ This man calleth for Elias ” ; and our Saviour’s cry, “ I thirst,”

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must have been heard very shortly after His cry of desertion.

If we compare the narrative of S. John with those of S. Matthew and S. Mark, we shall be able to trace the sequence of events. The cry of desertion is misunderstood, or at once wilfully perverted, by the mockers who were congregated at the foot of the Cross. "This Man," they say, "this would-be Messiah calleth and calleth in vain for His Elias." At this moment, conscious of thirst and remembering one unfulfilled word of ancient prophecy that the Scripture might also receive its accomplishment, our Lord said, "I thirst."

Moved by a spirit of half-scornful compassion, one of those around hastens to procure the refreshment which the dying Saviour so evidently needs. His associates, as though they would hinder him, mockingly cry, "Trouble not thyself to do this; let us wait and see if Elias will come and save Him."

I. We take this fifth word of our Lord as expressive of physical suffering and present helplessness. The previous cry had reference to the agony of His soul; this word speaks of the condition of His body. Extreme thirst is one of the most unbearable of physical torments. For nearly twenty hours the man Christ Jesus had partaken of no refreshment, which hours had been hours of constant and constantly augmenting agony: agony of mind and body. There was the fearful conflict of Gethsemane, in which His sweat was as great drops of blood. There was His mental anguish. There was the distress caused by the insults and indignities to which He had been exposed. All this was followed by the cruel scourging, the cross-bearing, His attachment and His untold sufferings upon it. We need not wonder that His tongue cleaved to the roof of His mouth and His moisture turned into the drought of summer.

Yes, we have reason to believe that our Lord was at

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this time enduring one of the most horrible sensations from which humanity can suffer. When He said, "I thirst," He teaches us most convincingly that He was a partaker of flesh and blood, that He really shared our nature, becoming subject to all those conveniences and sinless infirmities which are incident to it: We have here the cry of agonized humanity. We see here the sinless but suffering Son of Man.

But while clearly recognizing the physical sufferings of Christ, there are other things to be kept in view, and among them always this: that these, great and extreme as they were, formed the smallest part of His sufferings. As we have already seen, Christ's agony was agony of soul. The torment of this physical thirst was nothing compared with the sufferings endured through those three hours of darkness, when with a strange sense of desolation He was thirsting for the light of His Father's countenance, which had never until then been obscured. This fifth word from the Cross is the word of the hero at the close of the battle's strife. While the full tide of battle is surging round him, while the deadly contest remains undetermined, the wounds may bleed, the body may suffer, but in pressing onwards towards victory there is no thought of them. But in the pause of victory, the conqueror has returning consciousness of physical need, and says, "I thirst." So dearly bought has been the triumph, so exhausted is the conqueror by protracted strife, that He needs refreshment in order to shout forth to the joy of heaven and the confusion of hell the undying word of victory.

In these words, "I thirst," we have the only expression of physical suffering which our Lord seems ever to have uttered. We see that His life from first to last was one of suffering and self-denial, but we can

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nowhere in the gospel history trace the voice of complaint. Everywhere we see simple, meek, patient endurance of whatever was inflicted upon Him. This reminds us that Christ's silence was not that of insensibility. If He did not complain it was not because He did not feel.

As we think of these sufferings of our Lord, we must think of them as voluntarily incurred, and voluntarily endured. Who is this that in suffering and apparent helplessness says "I thirst"? It is He Whom angels were longing to minister unto; Who, with a few small loaves and fishes had satisfied the need of famishing thousands. It is He Who, only a few hours before, had rebuked the impetuous S. Peter with the words, "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" Never let us forget as we witness the sufferings of One Who had power to lay down His life and the power to take it up again. "No man taketh it from Me," He said. "I lay it down Myself." Yes, He Who submits to the torment and outrage of crucifixion does so having the full consciousness that He is King of kings and Lord of lords. That we might be saved, He condescends to suffer; and we see Him, to Whom all honour belongeth, making Himself of no reputation, and stooping to the death of the Cross.

II. But we may fairly take these words as *expressing the thirst of our Lord's Soul* for the accomplishment of the work on which He had entered. We see the gleaming forth of that same spirit which so constantly influenced our Saviour during His earthly mission and ministry. It was a spirit of self-abnegation which led Him to account everything as unimportant which did not bear upon the work which He came to accomplish. Here His thought is of the scripture to be fulfilled rather than of the thirst to be assuaged. We see every line

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of life converge upon one point, and the most thorough subordination of all earthly circumstances to the effectuation of the Divine purpose. He is thirsting for the salvation of sinners, for the redemption of the world. He is bound to the Cross by His great love for the children of men. Yearning for their deliverance He came to earth to suffer and to die.

Our Lord sets us an example in every respect. What can we conceive as nobler than His conduct on this occasion? Enduring sufferings of unexampled intensity we see Him manifest no impatience, we hear Him utter no complaint. Free from all excitement we see Him possessing His soul in that spirit of patience which He had inculcated on His followers. Here He teaches them how to suffer and to be strong. And surely we are as much struck by the collectedness of thought as by the composure of temper manifested by our Lord at this time. We all know how difficult it is with any degree of purpose to exercise thought when we are suffering physical pain to a comparatively inconsiderable extent. If we look to Christ we see the endurance of sufferings the most extreme and yet perfect collectedness of mind. While hanging on the Cross, the subject of physical pain to an extent that we can but faintly imagine at all, and exposed to distracting influences of many different kinds, Christ could think calmly and consecutively. We see this in the provision He made for His mother. We see this again in the very act of death. We see Him deliberately contemplating the work in which He is engaged and not overlooking one of its most minute and, apparently, unimportant details. Does this not afford us strong assurance as to the completeness of the whole scheme of redemption? All is done, the work is finished, nothing is neglected, nothing is overlooked. We may feel quite sure that the entire scheme of redeeming love has been carried

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out to the very letter. Incidentally, then, does this word which seems the least significant of all those uttered from the Cross afford strong consolation to those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. That work ought to satisfy us which God has declared to be finished, and which God has accepted as complete.

He Who thirsted asks thirst of us. He, indeed, thirsted that we might thirst. He thirsted for our salvation that we might thirst after perfect righteousness. The very hunger and thirst of the soul after God are advocates for us, and obtain for us salvation. "Like as the hart desireth the water brook, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God." Oh, that we could all say this in sincerity. Alas! too frequently it is not so. We drink of the waters of Babylon and have no craving for the river of water that proceedeth out of the throne of God and the Lamb. "Whosoever drinketh of this water"—the stream of worldly pleasures and occupations—"shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." We may safely leave all in the hands of that Saviour Who, when in the very pains of death, "knowing that all things were now accomplished," cried, "I thirst."

But we cannot close our address on this fifth word without noticing that in it we are taught the lesson of self-restraint. Possibly we have at some time or other stood by the bedside of some fevered sufferer. The parched lips and the weak voice whisper the words, "I thirst." But there were none to minister at the death-bed of Jesus but the rough soldiers. There was no soothing drink but sour vinegar. Indeed, these words of our Lord appear to be a sermon against gluttony. This takes various forms. Possibly its greatest is that of drink. By drink how many a life has been ruined, how many a home broken up! How sad a heritage of sin it is when handed down to

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children ! Excessive eating, too, while less dangerous in its effects, is of the same nature of sin, and a glutton is seldom good for much. Gluttony, again, appears in lesser ways, such as daintiness, excessive thought about food, extravagance in expensive delicacies, and grumbling when food is not just what we want. In short, it appears in the neglect of self-denial. Our dear Lord denied His appetite, tasting only vinegar in order that He might witness and expiate our sins of self-indulgence. The first Adam had fallen by yielding to this sin. The second Adam regained the lost kingdom for humanity by denying even lawful appetites. We must obey our Lord even in matters which appear to us of little importance. There can be no doubt that in the past, and even at the present time, we are inclined to be too self-indulgent and pleasure loving as a people. By force of circumstances we are now, in a measure, being cured. But there is still room for improvement. When our brave lads return from the Front—those whom God sees fit to spare—they will teach the nation at large the virtue of self-denial. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. There is but little doubt that these men will have a good effect on the morals of the nation. Let us pray to-day, as we witness the thirsting Jesus on the Cross, for grace to ever practise self-denial.

THE SIXTH WORD.

THE WORD OF VICTORY.

S. JOHN XIX. 30.

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished."

WE have now come to the consideration of the sixth word—the word of victory. The three last words from the Cross seemed to have followed one another in quick succession. We remarked, in respect of the previous word spoken by our Lord, that it was not to be regarded as an indication of any new heightening of His agony, but rather as a proof that the worst had been endured. Therefore, as triumphant, Jesus was just entering on the festal rest of victory.

Here we have the word that announces victory—a word declarative not of the mere fact of termination but of completion, of perfection. All that our Lord came to do and to suffer has been done and endured—suffering, life, work—all is finished. The work which had been given Him to do, and to the doing of which He makes such frequent reference, is now brought to a conclusion. The full meaning of this word, "It is finished," we cannot fathom. Eternity itself will be required to unfold its significance. It declares that all things were actually or potentially accomplished. Christ, the Captain of our salvation feels that He has now gloriously triumphed over all His foes and our foes. He has wrought deliverance for His people. He

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reviews His life and compares it with all that had been spoken concerning it. The life is complete, answering perfectly to the will of God and the predictions of His prophets. It is the one perfect finished life which has been lived in this world. Hanging there on the Cross, about to pour out His soul unto death, to commit His Spirit into the hands of His Heavenly Father, all the sufferings of life, now culminating in a cruel and shameful death, pass before Him. As He reviews the course He has pursued from the stable of Bethlehem to the Cross of Calvary, He can think of no humiliation to which He has not been ready to submit, no suffering which He has not been ready to endure, in doing that work which He came to accomplish. The waves and billows have rolled over Him, and that bitter cup which had been given Him to drink is drained to the very dregs. All is finished. He can think of nothing more to be done or endured. And the work itself that He came to perform presents itself to the view of the dying Saviour as a finished work. The head of the great adversary is crushed. The power of hell is broken. The law is magnified. The claims of justice are satisfied. The gates of the kingdom of heaven are thrown open. The sacrifice is offered, the atonement made, and God can declare His righteousness in the very act of forgiveness. Of this work, on which all our hopes depend, our Lord can say, "It is finished." Though the actual crisis of death was not yet passed, though the burial, the resurrection, the ascension, were waiting their accomplishment, the Crucified One regarded them all as completely and already done. He could say, "It is finished. All is done. All is secured. All is finished, if not actually, yet potentially and virtually."

We are here presented with a subject of contemplation with which we are quite incompetent adequately to deal. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. It

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is high, we cannot attain to it, and the instinct of the heart prompts us to say, "Come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Saviour."

As we listen to this word—the sixth word from the Cross—we feel that its vast significance stretches far beyond the reach of human thought—beyond the sublimest flight of imagination. It is much too little to say that the whole history of the passion, the entire scope of the life of Jesus Christ, yea, even the whole Bible, is included in it. We must add the whole history of the world and of the kingdom of God. We might in connection with a subject like this allow ourselves the luxury of unfettered meditation, being sure that by whatever road our thoughts might choose to travel it would be a pleasant and not unprofitable one. But it will, perhaps, be better for us to confine our thoughts within a narrow compass, and consider only two or three main ideas expressed by this sixth word, and the more important practical lessons taught by it.

I. Let us consider *what this word declares*. This word, "It is finished," declares the termination of our Lord's life, the conclusion, the completion of that life which had been visibly lived on earth. It makes the conclusion of the model life of the world the only specimen of perfected and finished life that the world had ever witnessed. We may conclude this fact to be unique—that which distinguishes our world from all other worlds, our race from all other races—that here the incarnate God lived and died. Other worlds have wonders and splendour which ours cannot emulate, but no wonder like the great mystery of godliness, no splendour like the brightness of the Father's glory. It is this which awakens the astonishment of angels, who

" See in the face
Of Adam's race
The nature God doth share."

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But in what way are we to regard this life which is now brought to a close and declared to be finished? The life which Christ lived on earth He lived for us. He was made of a woman, made under the law that He might redeem us who were under the law and give unto us the adoption of children. All human life presents a twofold aspect. It has its manward and its Godward side. So it was with the life of Christ. Though He was Lord of all He took upon Himself the form of a servant and a son. He gives us a summary of human obligation under two heads: our duty to God, and to our neighbour. We are to love God with all our hearts and soul and strength, and our neighbour as ourself. This is the whole duty of man, and our Lord not only tells us, but shows us in what the perfection of human life consists. This life in which He fulfilled all righteousness is brought by the will of Christ Himself to a close. It is finished. So, too, is the work of redemption. His work is finished because His life and sufferings are.

II. Let us next notice *what practical lessons this sixth word from the Cross teaches us*. It teaches us something as to the exclusive ground of our faith. Of the work which our Lord came to perform and on which our hopes for time and eternity repose, He declares absolutely and emphatically that it is finished. By this we are to understand not that our Lord has come to the end of His work, but He has brought His work—the work He came to do—to a successful termination. The work itself is done, is finished. What a good foundation have we here to build upon! When we look to ourselves and to our doings, we meet with nothing but incompleteness, imperfection. There is nothing to which we can point which in itself is fit to be presented unto God. If the ground of our acceptance were to be found in our obedience, what would become

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of us? How pleasant, then, is it for us to be able to look away from our miserably defective and imperfect doings to the absolutely perfect work of Christ. Here we have what we could never have wrought for ourselves—a complete and perfect righteousness in which an omniscient and infinitely holy God can discover no defect. Should not this work of our Lord, which He, with His dying breath, declared to be finished, satisfy us? May we not rest here in perfect peace? We must rest simply on this work of the Lord Jesus for our justification before God or not at all. If our Lord has actually done the work and has declared it finished, what greater indignity can we offer to Him than to act as if His work were not a finished work? Yet thus do some treat the work of Christ. They would add to it or take away from it. They seek to exaggerate here or attenuate there. But our Lord will not be a Saviour upon such terms. He will be accepted as altogether our Saviour or not at all.

From the perfection of Christ's work for us we may safely conclude that He will finish His work in us. He Who hath begun a good work in us will not leave it incomplete. He will prosper that which concerneth us, and not forsake the work of His own hands.

Herein, however, we have no encouragement for indolence or indifference. Some would say, "If our Lord has done all, what is there for us to do? May we not fold our hands in idleness and sit still?" No; it is not, it can not, be so. This very word which sets before us the exclusive ground of our faith sets also before us in the finished life and work of our Lord a pattern for our imitation. We are not to earn life by working for it, but in the energy of a life freely given we are with all freedom and diligence to serve God. We are called to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Let it be our aim when life shall come

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to a close not only to be found resting on the finished work of Christ, but found there as faithful servants, who, having finished the work which has been given them to do, have nothing more to do than at their Master's bidding cease from their labours and enter into rest.

There are just two thoughts which we may well mark, learn, and inwardly digest. These we should ever retain in our minds. The one is the supreme manifestation of the love of God: "So God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his brethren."

The other thought is the evidence to man of the extreme odiousness of sin. We see what sinful passions will lead to. Coupled with this last thought is the hatefulness of sin in God's sight. Yes, the Cross teaches us the extreme vileness and hatefulness of sin. We can only be like our Lord if we too hate it and shun it. When repentance has wrought in us self-accusation—not self-excuse—charity, contrition, and purpose of amendment, then, and then only, "It is finished." The repentance is complete, and the Paradise is granted so that, as a son, the sinner can approach God with the petition, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

This last word of our dying Lord sums up all the duties of the Christian life, and witnesses against the world-wide sin of covetousness. Covetousness is essentially worldliness and its seat is especially the soul. It is a craving to possess. It is a sin which is attractive enough to engross the greater part of the world and to lead people to live lives of self-denial in its pursuit, which if lived for Christ would make them saints.

It exists often in a spiritual form in a craving for

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more gifts and graces (when we do not use what we have). It is a desire for faster progress in Christian life. Our Lord witnessed against this sin throughout His life. He kept Himself detached from creatures. He lived a life of poverty, having not where to lay His head, depending on the ministrations of others for the very necessities of life. Let us, then, learn from our Lord a lesson of detachment. How many things do we covet? We desire fine dress—our Lord was stripped. A fine house—our Lord had only the Cross. Money—Jesus was very poor. The praise of men—Jesus was reviled. Friends and relatives—our Lord gave up S. Mary and S. John. Life—our Lord gave up His for us. The great remedy against covetousness is taught us in these last words of our Lord, namely, to commend all into our Father's hands—to be satisfied with what He gives us. We must leave our possessions when we die. Let us learn now to be detached from them; it will save the struggle then. There is only one real possession, namely, Jesus Himself. The passion of having is part of our nature and so not wrong in itself. It is only wrong when we crave unworthy objects. Before the fall it was satisfied by God. Now it is either earthly possessions or Jesus. Which are we seeking?

The teaching of our Lord's last words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," sum up the Christian's life, namely, devotion to the will of God. It is the panacea for all life's trials. It is the great preparation for death.

THE SEVENTH WORD.

THE WORD OF DEATH.

S. LUKE XXIII. 46.

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having thus said, He gave up the ghost.”

WE, who have been contemplating the successive events of Calvary, are now called upon to witness the closing scenes of the great tragedy. Having listened to the ever-memorable words uttered by our Lord in His Passion, it is ours to listen to the last word of all, the word of death, wherewith He commends His spirit into the hands of His Father.

The first word, that of intercession for His murderers, was probably spoken while Jesus was being affixed to the Cross. The next word, that of promise and kingly majesty, was elicited by the petition of the malefactor who was dying at His side. It was spoken by the Saviour at the time when His kingly character and claims were most completely the subjects of mockery and derision. Then came the word of filial affection, which was spoken shortly before the descent of the preternatural darkness. Then from the sixth hour to the ninth hour the entire scene was veiled. That period was a period of silence as well as of darkness, the termination of which was almost simultaneous with our Lord's cry of desertion. The last three words

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follow one another in swift succession. Wearied by His mighty conflict and by His solitary endurance of unutterable agony, our Lord gives utterance to the cry of agonized humanity, "I thirst." The vinegar is offered and received. The one outstanding prediction of Scripture is fulfilled, and then is heard the word of victory. With a loud voice is heard the announcement made to all that the work He came to do is finished. The word of victory is proclaimed, and now it only remains for our Lord to utter the last word—the word of death, which is the word of victorious faith—"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

This period of consummation is signalized by certain concurrent phenomena. There are earthquakes, the rocks are riven, the veil of the temple is rent in twain, the graves open. The symbolical significance of these remarkable events is so obvious that there is no need to dwell upon it.

We have a remarkable proof of providential arrangement if we consider the *time* of Christ's death. Regarding this event as that of which all the prophets had spoken, and to which all the arrangements of the ritual economy had pointed, there is an obvious and striking appropriateness in the time of the offering of the great world sacrifice. It was in the month Nisan, the first month of the Jewish ecclesiastical or sacred year, and the appointed season of the Passover. It was the fourteenth day of the month, the day regarded above all other days of the great festival. It was at this period of commemorative and predictive solemnity—in the evening of this great feast-day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, the very time of the slaying of the paschal lamb—that Christ our Passover was slain for us. According to our reckoning of time, at about nine o'clock in the morning our dear Lord was affixed to the Cross. At noon the darkness descended, and about

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three o'clock in the afternoon Christ uttered these last words and gave up the ghost. We cannot regard this as a mere coincidence, but as a proof that God would have it so. It appears that not only in that way, but at that very time, Christ, the Lamb, Who had been potentially slain from the foundation of the world, should offer Himself in actual sacrifice once *for* all.

But we must return to the last word of our Lord. The words by Jesus in the very moment of death remind us of those which David used long before, and which the protomartyr, S. Stephen, used not long after. They are an adaptation of the words which we meet with in Psalm xxxi. 5 : " Into Thy hands I commend my spirit ; for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." The language of this prayer lays hold of life at its root, as springing directly from God, and as also living in the believer from God and in God. This life it places under His protection, Who is the true life of all spirit-life. It is the language of the prayer with which the dying Christ breathed forth His life. As we listen to these words of the dying Saviour we are reminded

I. *Of the way in which our Lord Jesus did die.* This last word spoken from the Cross sets a seal upon the rest. With tranquillity and child-like confidence does our Lord commend His spirit to His Father's keeping. A text of Holy Scripture was the torch which lighted Him into the valley of the shadow of death. As He had always lived in the Scriptures, so did He wish to die with its words upon His lips. As we look upon our Divine Redeemer at the very moment He is yielding up His spirit, as we listen to His last word, we feel that His death is not less full of significance than His life.

As we read this last word the impression produced upon us is that the death of our Lord was voluntary, spontaneous, and unconstrained. When He gave up the ghost, it was not because He could not resist it,

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but because He was willing to lay down that life over which He had absolute power. When men die, they yield to an inevitable necessity. What we call death is but the final out-working of a law written in our members. When the appointed moment comes no man hath power over his spirit to retain it. Death is the result of causes which, ordinarily, have been long in operation, and which result, however much we may dread and dislike it, we are powerless to avoid or postpone. The utter helplessness of man never appears more evident than when we see him gradually subdued, or suddenly smitten down by this resistless might of the King of Terrors. Even when man voluntarily submits to, or even inflicts upon himself some fatal blow, the deadly injury having been received, the consequence, which is death, must be endured. When we contemplate the death of our Lord, we see something altogether different. We see Him voluntarily submitting to death, dying with a perfect sense of freedom. No man taketh His life from Him. He layeth it down. By mere volition He might have saved Himself from the Cross. Down to the time of His uttering this final word He might, had He been so pleased, have descended from the Cross in kingly might and majesty. But no! It was for this very thing that He came into the world. He was made for a little while lower than the angels for the suffering of death. To this fiery baptism He had been looking forward from the very first, and felt straitened until it was accomplished. He hangs upon the Cross a perfectly voluntary sufferer, and, at last, knowing well that even then He might avoid the supreme crisis, He says, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and having said this He gave up the ghost."

As we look upon this voluntary death of our Lord we see Him laying down His life for others—for us. He

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died for sins not His own. His death is sacrificial and substitutionary. He Who has been representing us in life and in suffering now represents us in death.

It is unnecessary to refer to the way in which this voluntary death of our Lord is ever represented in Holy Scripture as the point round which all interest gathers. If we look to the ritual mysteries of the Old Testament we see this. If we listen to many of the most remarkable utterances of the New Testament we hear the same thing. We shall never learn the true lessons of the Cross until we regard the death of our Lord as sacrificial and substitutionary. "He gave Himself for our sins." "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." "He gave Himself that He might redeem us from all iniquity." Alluding to His Own death and the greatness of His love manifested thereby, He says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Yes, He gave Himself for us. This is the one foundation of our faith and hope. The Lord Jesus took the sinner's place.

II. Here, at the Cross, we not only see how our Lord did die, but we also *see how the believer in Jesus may die*. The believer, in his degree, may make the dying experience of his Lord his own. Our Divine Redeemer not only sets before us the example of a holy life, but He also reveals to us the secret of a peaceful and blessed death. He lived and suffered and died as He did that we might be able to die as otherwise we could not. By dying He has overcome him that had the power of death—that is the devil—and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He has taken away the sting of death and victory from the grave. If, as believers, we are interested in our Lord, death is despoiled of its terrors. He suffered and died for us, that we might be able to make His

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words our own, and, when the end comes, say in a spirit of filial confidence, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." We must all die in some way or other, at some time or other. Happy shall we be if we are able to die as Jesus died. He lived. He died. He ever liveth that this might be possible.

Now, the soul can only find its true rest and place of safety in God. In this emergency the believer at once thinks of God—of God not in Himself, but as He is made known in Jesus Christ. Unless we can thus look to God, to God in Christ, there can be no comfort, no confidence in death. Not long after our Lord died on the Cross we are presented in the sacred narrative with an account of the way in which a believer in Christ did die. We allude to S. Stephen, the protomartyr. His was a rough and cruel death. We see him in the midst of a cruel, excited, and angry mob. We see his bruised and battered body falling to the earth, its proper resting-place, under a hail of heavy and ragged stones. Though not insensible to pain, he is not much concerned about the fate of the fleshy tabernacle, which is being roughly unpinning and beaten down. He is thinking rather of the immortal, the undying tenant, which, presently enfranchised, shall speed away from earth and all earthly scenes and sufferings. Thinking of it, he cries out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." In thus commending his spirit to Jesus, he is but confiding in that best and truest friend Who has loved him and given Himself for him. May we be able, like S. Stephen, in the awful and trying hour of death, to rest simply in the power and faithfulness and love of Jesus. Then in that very last hour of all we shall be able to say with undisturbed tranquillity and much assurance of faith, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

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To-day our fighting brothers are in numberless instances meeting with death in a horrible form. They are laying down their lives for their brethren. They are sacrificing themselves on behalf of their fatherland. They have fought the good fight against unrighteousness and tyranny. On the shell-torn field or in the sodden trench they lie in death. With their dear Lord these heroes have trodden the path of suffering. Their work is ended, their course is run. They have entered into their rest. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," must have been their prayer in the last moments of conscious responsibility. And, brethren, who can doubt that according to the measure of their knowledge and opportunity for meditation it must have been the prayer of their daily lives as they stood face to face with death at the battle front? Yes, we can well believe that, as they discharged their daily duties under the most trying circumstances, they committed their spirits every day to God as to a father. So, too, may we well believe our living heroes, those who are being crucified to-day in the horrors of war, are now doing. Let us keep a little corner in our prayers to-day for these men, both the living and the dead. Even to-day, whilst we kneel at the foot of the Cross, watching the Prince of Peace, our soldiers are striving for that peace which must be won by war. The seeds of peace were sown in the fields of Bethlehem, but they must be watered by the blood of many a Calvary before they can reach their perfect fruition.

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